

Remarks and Arguments

Claims 2, 4-12, 14 and 16-22 have been presented for examination. Claims 4, 16 and 18-21 have been amended. Claims 6 and 17 have been canceled.

Claims 2, 4-12, 14 and 16-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §101 as drawn to non-statutory subject matter. The examiner comments that the recited “signal” can be interpreted as reciting only the physical characteristics of a form of energy, which is non-statutory. In response, claims 4, 16 and 18-21 have been amended to clearly recite statutory subject matter. Claim 4 is illustrative. It recites “A method for evaluating a set of credentials comprising at least one group credential in response to a request to access a resource, comprising ... granting access to the resource in the event said second trust rating satisfies predetermined criteria.” The confusing wording regarding provision of a “signal” has been eliminated. Claims 16 and 18-21 have been amended in a similar manner. Thus, it is believed that the claims now recite statutory subject matter and the rejection under 35 U.S.C. §101 is hereby traversed.

Claims 2, 4-12, 14 and 16-22 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) as anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,853,988 (Dickinson.) The examiner comments that the Dickinson reference discloses all of the recited limitations.

As discussed in the response filed on November 26, 2004, in the present invention, if plural certification paths exist within the set of credentials, the composite trust level for each certification path is first established and an overall trust rating is determined to be the highest composite trust rating among the various certification paths. This is recited in the claims. For example, claim 4 is illustrative. It recites, in lines 9-15, “determining for each of said plurality of certification paths a third trust rating equal to the lowest trust rating in the credentials of the respective certification path ... determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating by assigning said second trust rating equal to the highest trust rating of said third trust ratings...”

The Dickinson reference discloses a trust engine that can be used by different vendors having different authentication procedures to provide a comment method for authenticating a user. In particular, when an authentication confidence level

established by an authentication engine in the trust server fails to meet the required trust level of the party requiring the authentication, a process called trust “arbitrage” is performed. During this process, additional authentication information may be requested from the user in order to boost the authentication level. If additional authentication information is received from the user, then it is provided to the authentication engine to compute a new authentication level.

The examiner indicates that Dickinson column 44, lines 7-46, discloses the limitation “determining a second trust rating for said set of credentials based, at least in part, upon an analysis of said at least one first trust rating by assigning said second trust rating equal to the highest trust rating of said third trust ratings” recited in claim 4, lines 12-15. This section of Dickinson states that, if the user provides additional information (authentication instances), then the transaction engine forwards these additional instances to the authentication engine and the authentication is revaluated based on the pre-existing and new instances. See Dickinson, column 44, lines 9-16. The method that the authentication engine uses to compute an authentication from several authentication instances is disclosed in Dickinson at column 39, line 48- column 41, line 16. As stated there, this method may involve varying computations involving the reliability percentages. However, Dickinson does not disclose selecting the highest trust rating in the group as recited in claim 4 lines 12-15. Thus, claim 4 patentably distinguishes over the cited Dickinson reference.

Independent claims 16 and 18-21 recite analogous limitations in lines 16-19, 14-17, 15-18, 16-19 and 11-14, respectively. Therefore, they distinguish over the cited Dickinson reference in the same manner as claim 4.

Claims 2 and 5-12 are dependent on claim 4 and incorporate the limitations thereof. Therefore, they distinguish over the cited Dickinson reference in the same manner as claim 4.

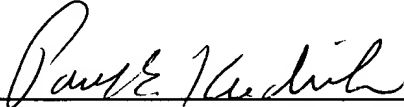
Claims 2, 5 and 7-12 are dependent on claim 4 and incorporate the limitations thereof. Therefore, they distinguish over the cited Dickinson reference in the same manner as claim 4.

Claim 14 is dependent on claim 16 and incorporates the limitations thereof. Therefore, it distinguishes over the cited Dickinson reference in the same manner as claim 16.

Claim 22 is dependent on claim 21 and incorporates the limitations thereof. Therefore, it distinguishes over the cited Dickinson reference in the same manner as claim 21.

In light of the forgoing amendments and remarks, this application is now believed in condition for allowance and a notice of allowance is earnestly solicited. If the examiner has any further questions regarding this amendment, he is invited to call applicants' attorney at the number listed below. The examiner is hereby authorized to charge any fees or direct any payment under 37 C.F.R. §§1.17, 1.16 to Deposit Account number 02-3038.

Respectfully submitted


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